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GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

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This *Framework* was endorsed at the Glen Eira City Council meeting of 23 July 2024 and will be reviewed within three years.

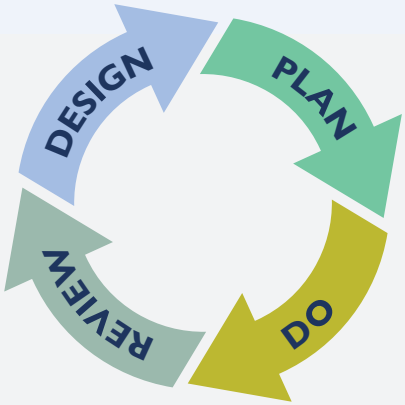
FRAMEWORK AT A GLANCE

Glen Eira City Council's Community Engagement Framework underpins our commitment to open, transparent relationships and conversations between Council and our community.

FOUR PRINCIPLES

- TIMELY
- ACCESSIBLE
- INCLUSIVE
- TRANSPARENT

OUR APPROACH



IAP2 ENGAGEMENT

- INFORM
- CONSULT
- INVOLVE
- COLLABORATE
- EMPOWER

We will strive to continually develop and improve community engagement practices, keeping pace with changing needs, new approaches and influences through:

INTRODUCTION

Glen Eira City Council is passionate about engaging with our community. We engage to empower our community so they can inform Council's decisions, programs and services.

We know our community is passionate about having their say. We regularly conduct community engagement to better understand our community's needs, seek out new ideas, and strengthen relationships between Council and our community.

We champion open and transparent community engagement that informs and educates our community. We give them the opportunity to have their say and be heard. It's an important process for the development of robust fit-for-purpose plans, projects and strategies.

Community engagement also supports Council to make informed decisions, continually improve local services, places and environments, and respond to diverse community needs.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Community engagement is where Council makes the community a part of decision-making. It gives the community the opportunity to shape the services, plans and projects that matter to them.

Community engagement is at the heart of the *Local Government Act 2020*. Everyone in a community who is impacted by an issue should be able to be part of the decision-making process. As the level of government closest to the community, councils have both the opportunity and the responsibility to enable participatory democracy. We therefore must be proactive and deliberate in how we engage.

PURPOSE

The *Community Engagement Framework* underpins our commitment to providing opportunities for open, transparent relationships and conversations between Council and our community. By engaging our community when we make decisions, we aren't just fulfilling our legislative requirements and embracing sound governance. We're also building Council's profile and protecting our trusted brand.

The *Community Engagement Framework* supports Council to deliver its *Community Engagement Policy*, outlining how we will achieve the policy principles and commitments. It builds on the previous *Community Engagement Strategy 2022–2026* to deliver an action-centred approach to continuous improvement and measuring our success.

The *Community Engagement Framework* was co-designed with Council's Community Engagement Advisory Committee.

Council's Public Affairs department supports business areas across Council to conduct good practice community engagement. As our community's expectations change and new technologies and ways to engage emerge, this *Community Engagement Framework* helps to ensure our engagement activities are relevant and contemporary.

ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Council is committed to proactively and transparently engaging with the Glen Eira community. Our engagement principles guide how we plan, deliver and close the loop on our engagement efforts.

The four principles are:

TIMELY

> The community is engaged early so they can genuinely influence decision-making about the things that interest and impact them.

ACCESSIBLE

> We provide convenient and easy engagement options for people of all ages and abilities.

INCLUSIVE

> We empower a diverse range of people by taking a more inclusive and targeted approach that is relevant to the audiences.

TRANSPARENT

> We proactively and transparently deliver engagement programs, and publicly and impartially report on their outcomes.

> We clearly explain what the community can influence.

Our engagement principles are aligned to the *Glen Eira 2040 Community Vision*, *Council Plan*, *Customer Service Charter,* and our key strategies. They reinforce our commitment to our community that our community engagement will be timely and transparent.

Importantly, community engagement at Glen Eira City Council also aligns to the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum. The IAP2 Spectrum below helps us select the right level of participation for a given program.

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER*
> We will keep you informed.	> We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	> We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	> We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	> We will implement what you decide.

* Council cannot 'Empower' where it cannot delegate decisions.

Source: International Association for Public Participation

STAKEHOLDERS

We are committed to building representation, equitable inclusion and participation for all. We want participants in community engagement to be representative of the people and groups most impacted by the decisions we make.

We will strive for all members of our community to be supported to contribute their voice regardless of age, gender, sexuality, income, education, cultural background, language skills or disability.

When we plan engagements, we carefully analyse the stakeholders, individuals, population groups and community groups who are most impacted by, or have an interest in, the decision or outcomes of an engagement. Some issues and decisions may impact the whole municipality, while others may impact specific people or groups.

Engagement programs may target:

Residents, including groups such as:

- children and young people under the age of 18
- older people
- parents and their children
- people with limited literacy
- people facing disadvantage
- people with a disability, vision or hearing impairment and their carers
- multicultural community members
- LGBTIQA+ community members
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- other minority groups

Ratepayers

Businesses

Community clubs and groups

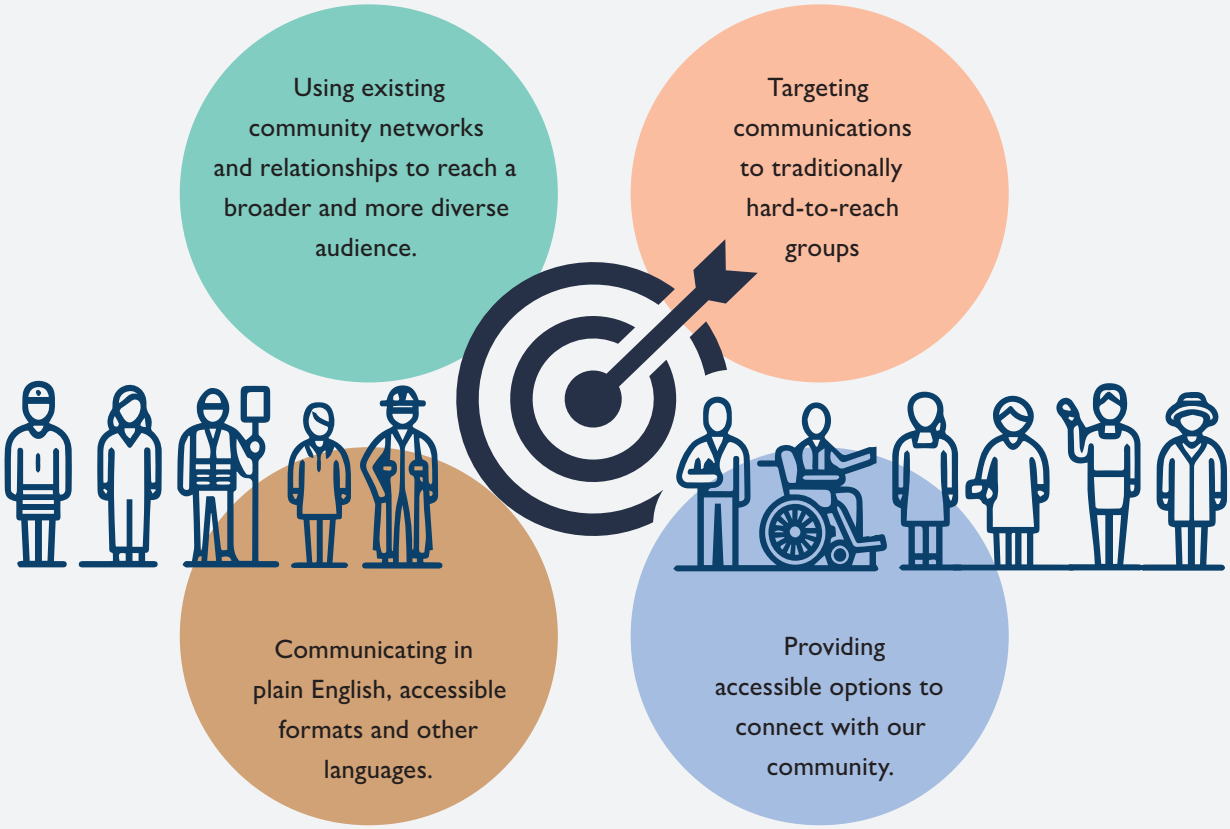
Community organisations

Federal, state and local government bodies

Council's Advisory Committees

TARGETED ENGAGEMENTS

We take steps to ensure individuals and groups who may be harder to reach can participate in our engagement programs. We do this by:



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Our engagement is inclusive and encourages participation from people whose voices may not be frequently heard. To deliver on this promise to our community, we:

> Engage with children and young people in accessible, inclusive safe ways and child and youth-friendly spaces.

> Use translations and interpreters to engage with non-English speaking residents.

> Go where our diverse community members already are — such as multicultural events, community group meetings, and gathering places.

> Offer support to individuals, their carers and loved ones to help them participate in community engagement opportunities.

> Partner with service providers to share opportunities to engage.

> Follow web content accessibility guidelines.

APPROACH

Council's approach to community engagement is informed by the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, recommendations from the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, the *Local Government Act 2020*, and Council's *Community Engagement Policy*.

It is underpinned by this *Framework*, our *Glen Eira 2040 Community Vision* and *Glen Eira Council Plan*.

Our approach to engagement follows a 'Design, Plan, Do, Review' methodology to ensure consistency and good practice.

DESIGN	PLAN	DO	REVIEW
> We identify opportunities to engage and understand the context where engagement could occur. This process is best conducted very early in the life of a project to determine how the community can influence decision-making. The purpose for engagement is clarified, as well as how results will be used and who might need to be involved.	> We commence detailed planning for community engagement. This includes the details of who we need to engage (stakeholder analysis), what methods we will use, where and when we will engage, who will conduct the engagement, how we will report back to the community and how we will evaluate the engagement process. This stage ensures the engagement process is comprehensive and efficient, and allows Council to allocate the right timeframe and resources.	> We implement the community engagement plan. This involves engaging with key stakeholders and community through a variety of methods to collect feedback, which can be used to inform decision-making. We actively listen to and record what has been provided during the engagement process. Council then reports back to the community the results and outcomes of the engagement and how decisions were influenced. This stage provides us with the information required to inform decisions and provides an opportunity to engage with and learn from our community.	> We review the engagement process and record the lessons learnt during the process. This provides Council with an opportunity to increase the level of understanding of our community and build skills and knowledge to improve future engagement processes. Continuous improvement through monitoring, evaluation and learning is an integral part of our approach.

ENGAGEMENT CRITERIA

Knowing when Council will engage with the community is key to designing and delivering a transparent community engagement program.

The table on the next page sets out four levels of engagement at Glen Eira, informed by the types of projects, issues and decisions we regularly engage on and the minimum engagement period.

Our community has told us they want us to engage early, with plenty of time and opportunities to participate. The engagement periods outlined below provide minimum adequate time and opportunity for the community to have their say.

TRIGGERS TO ENGAGE

There are many factors that initiate Council to engage the community, including:

> Council offers a proposal that requires community input before making a Council decision

> a decision will come before Council which requires community input

> another level of government makes a significant proposal and asks for Council's view

> Council would like the community's views on a topic to inform future decision-making

> Council has a legislative obligation to engage on a proposal.

ENGAGEMENT LEVEL	PROJECT TYPE
HIGH Minimum of four weeks engagement period	• high level of community interest • high level of project complexity • high level of political interest • high impact on the whole/large part of the community or city • moderate to high level of project risk/s • high level of engagement support and budget needed, consultants often involved e.g. *Council Vision, Council Plan, long-term Financial Plan or Asset Plan*, or major changes to city-wide services
MODERATE Minimum of four weeks engagement period	• moderate level of community interest • moderate to high project complexity • high level of change/impact of a local nature OR moderate level of impact/change on the whole/large part of the community or city • moderate level of project risk/s • moderate to high level of council engagement support and budget needed, consultants sometimes involved e.g. *Master Plans, Structure Plans*, park and playground changes, major road work, streetscape works, key strategy and policy documents, new or changes to local laws
LOW–MODERATE Minimum of two weeks engagement period	• low to moderate level of community interest • low to moderate project complexity • moderate to high level of impact on local key stakeholder group/s OR low level of change/impact on the whole/large part of the community or city • low level of project risk/s • moderate level of council engagement support and budget, specialist consultant sometimes involved e.g. Minor changes to processes/services, operational policies, impact on vulnerable groups, localised amenity issues
LOW/TARGETED Minimum of two weeks engagement period	• low/very targeted level of community interest • low project complexity • change/impact predominantly local in nature • low level of project risk/s • high level of council engagement support, limited budget e.g. standard roadworks, development of local programs, landscaping, changes to car parking, purchasing/lease or sale of land

In some circumstances statutory requirements direct how Council undertakes community engagement, including the engagement period, as specified under relevant legislation and regulations. Engagement activities involving vulnerable groups should allow increased engagement timeframes to ensure these groups are provided adequate support and time to participate.

METHODS

Council uses a range of methods and tools to reach and engage our community. We use innovative methods and approaches to deliver best-practice engagement, meeting our community where they are and providing a range of accessible and meaningful ways to participate.

TOOLS TO ENGAGE

The tools we use to engage Glen Eira's community vary depending on the context, engagement objectives, levels of influence, budget, scale and timing. The methods used also depend on the level of engagement, target audiences and project complexity. The engagement planning process includes identifying the channels and methods we will use.

The following page provides examples of the tools and methods we commonly use. The channels and methods outlined below are applied using a building block approach; inform-level activities are carried through to the other levels of the spectrum.

We will continue to investigate and invest in innovative ways to engage with members of the community as well as understand the data we collect. This includes keeping pace with advances in technology solutions which improve discussions, engage harder to reach people in decision-making and enhance the community engagement experience. It also includes investigation and investment in methods for engaging with children and young people to help strengthen the voice of our children and young people in Council decision-making.

IAP2 SPECTRUM LEVEL	EXAMPLES OF OUR CHANNELS AND METHODS	
INFORM	• Have Your Say Glen Eira website • face-to-face engagement methods – drop-in and pop-up sessions • *Community Engagement e-newsletter* • *Glen Eira News* • social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube) groups	• Glen Eira City Council website • other Council-run E-newsletters • media releases • letterbox drop • posters/post cards • displays • emails
CONSULT	• Face-to-face engagement methods – drop-in and pop-up sessions (using the community engagement trailer) – information sessions (online and in-person) – interviews – workshops – meetings with key stakeholders/groups	• polls • surveys • Community Voice online community panel • Community Engagement Advisory Committee • written or email submissions
INVOLVE	• Face-to-face engagement methods – focus groups (a small group of carefully selected participants who contribute to open discussions for research) – visioning (a technique used to support a group of stakeholders in developing a shared vision of the future) – citizen panels (randomly selected representative panel who deliberates over an issue, over several days) – world cafe meetings (a structured conversational process for knowledge sharing where groups of people discuss a topic at several small tables like in a cafe)	• polls • surveys • Community Voice online community panel • Community Engagement Advisory Committee • field trips
COLLABORATE	• Face-to-face engagement methods – citizen panel – roundtables – forums – working groups – consultative budgeting – co-design processes	
EMPOWER	• Face-to-face engagement methods – citizen panel – project committees	

SUCCESS MEASURES

A critical part of our engagement planning process is establishing a clear set of objectives and measures to gauge success. We seek to identify specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) objectives and success measures for each individual engagement program. These are documented in the community engagement plan.

The success measures we typically use at Glen Eira are outlined below:

COMMUNICATION REACH

> how many people was the engagement communicated to via the channels identified in the communication plan?

ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPATION

> surveys/polls/activities completed
> conversations held during the engagement period
> attendees at meetings/information sessions
> demographic representation of participation (where relevant and collected)

ENGAGEMENT UNDERSTANDING

> people are well informed when they respond
> requests for clarification through engagement inbox/customer service

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

> reach and participation reflect the level of financial investment in the engagement program

EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

As well as investigating new ways to deliver our engagement programs, Council regularly looks for ways to strengthening our existing approach.

With a focus on continuous improvement, we undertake an evaluation process at the end of each engagement program. The evaluation process is planned at the initiation of the project in the community engagement plan and includes a review of:

> the objectives of the engagement plan

> the measurements of success and whether they were achieved

> lessons learned and future improvements.

We strive to continually develop and improve community engagement practices, keeping pace with changing needs, new approaches and influences.

We will continue to measure the success of our community engagement efforts through:

> our annual customer satisfaction survey engagement importance and performance measures

> feedback from our Community Voice Panel

> informal feedback from our community when undertaking engagement programs

> year-on-year engagement reach and participation to map engagement trends.

CLOSING THE LOOP

A critical part of the engagement process is reporting back to participants and the wider community about the outcome of the engagement and how their feedback influenced Council's decision-making.

WHEN TO CLOSE THE LOOP

It is important to close the loop with the community at various stages throughout the engagement process including:

- at key progress milestones during longer-term engagement programs
- thanking participants for their feedback when engagements close
- publishing engagement summary reports and other information
- including community feedback information in Council reports.

HOW TO CLOSE THE LOOP

We close the loop with our community through a variety of channels which may include:

- *Have Your Say* project page updates
- *Glen Eira News*
- Glen Eira City Council website
- social media
- Council agendas and minutes
- direct communication to participating community members (where known)
- digital newsletters.

The reporting format may vary depending on the nature of the engagement. Regardless of format, we aim to be timely, accessible to every participant and the broader community, and protective of the privacy and confidentiality of participants.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

IAP2 public participation spectrum

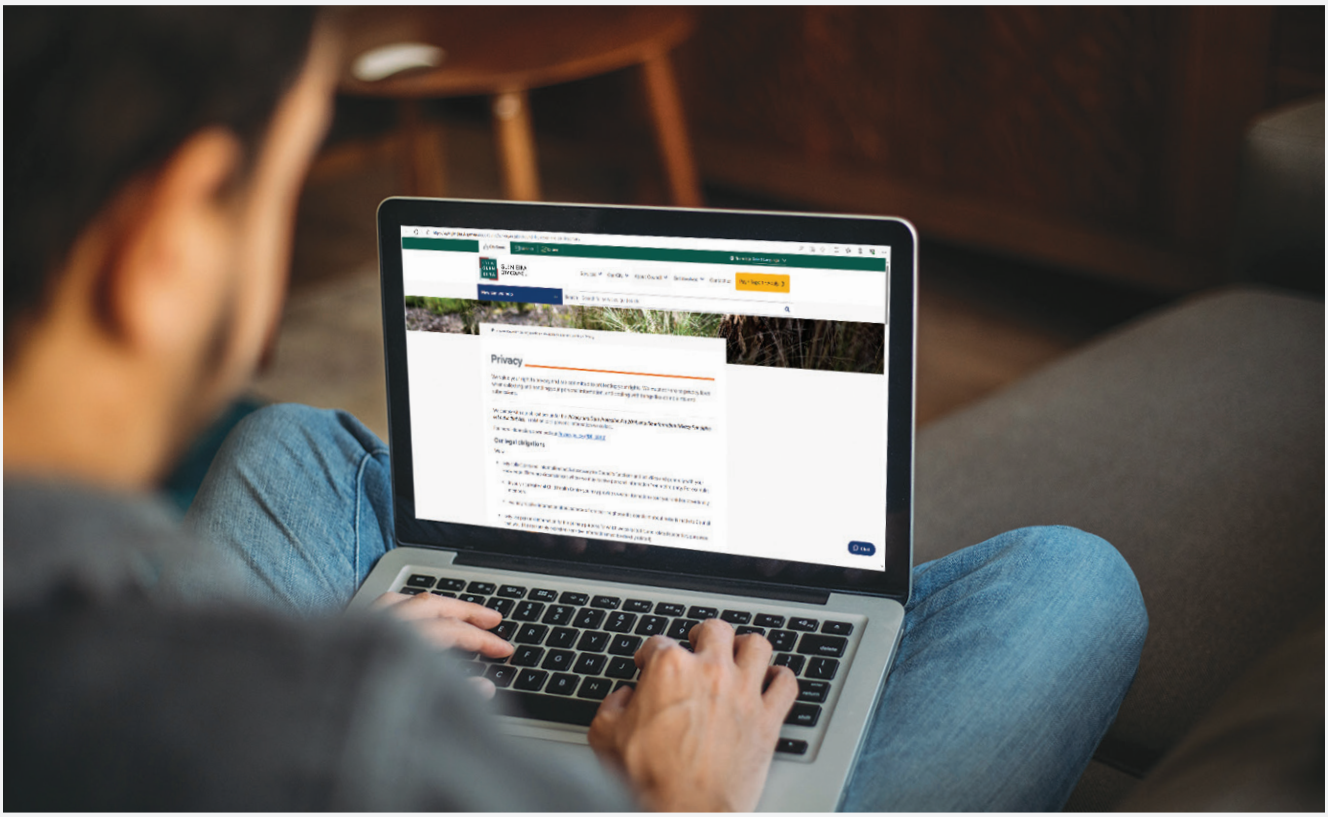
Victorian Auditor General's Report May 2017. *Public Participation and Community Engagement: Local Government Sector*

Glen Eira City Council Social Media Policy

Glen Eira City Council Media Policy

Glen Eira City Council Community Engagement Policy

Glen Eira City Council's privacy obligations and the *Glen Eira City Council Privacy Policy*



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National Relay Service
A phone solution for people who have a hearing or speech impairment.

Internet relay users connect to NRS then ask for
03 9524 3333.

TTY dial 13 36 77 or Speak and Listen dial
1300 555 727 then ask for 03 9524 3333.
https://internet-relay.nrscall.gov.au

Social media

Glen Eira City Council:
www.facebook.com/GlenEiraCityCouncil

@cityofgleneira:
www.instagram.com/cityofgleneira

Glen Eira arts, gallery and events:
www.facebook.com/gleneiraarts

Glen Eira Leisure:
www.facebook.com/GESAConline
www.instagram.com/gleneiraleisure

Glen Eira Libraries and Learning Centres:
www.facebook.com/GlenEiraLibraries
www.instagram.com/gleneiralibraries

Glen Eira Sustainable Living:
www.facebook.com/sustainablelivinggleneira

Glen Eira Youth Services:
www.facebook.com/GlenEiraYouthServices
www.instagram.com/gleneirayouthservices